

PENNSYLVANIA

DEATH BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO THE SURVIVING FAMILIES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY



To obtain certified copies of registered personal documents, contact the Bureau of Vital Statistics: Submit written request to 625 Forster Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120. Office: (877) 724-3258. www.portal.health.state.pa.us.

STATE DEATH BENEFITS

The State of Pennsylvania will pay a onetime payment of to the surviving spouse. The benefit amount for fiscal year 2013-2014 is \$123,277.64. If there is no spouse then payment goes to minor children, if any, then to parent or parents if there are no children. This amount is adjusted annually to reflect the annual percentage change in the Consumer Price Index. For more information contact the Bureau of Risk and Insurance Management, Department of General Services, 515 North Office Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17125. Office: (717) 787-5996. www.portal.state.pa.us.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Police Officer, Firefighter, Correction Employee, and National Guard Member Child Beneficiary Education Act

In late 1998, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania adopted House Bill #2024. This bill provides for an educational gratuity for any child of a police officer, firefighter, correction employee, or National Guard member killed in the performance of his or her duties provided the child is *25 years of age or younger at the time of application* for participation in this program, meets all admission requirements of the community college or State-owned or State-related institution to which application is made and is enrolled as a *full-time student at a community college or State-owned or State-related institution*. A child who is 25 years of age or younger at the time of the child's application for participation in this program and who meets all other eligibility requirements may receive an educational gratuity for up to five years provided the child otherwise continues to be eligible for participation.

Scope of Benefit

The benefit available under this section shall be provided only for full-time students who are pursuing undergraduate studies leading to an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree.

A child becomes eligible for this benefit after he or she has applied for available scholarships and Federal and State grants to cover tuition and room and board costs.

The child must provide a *record of application for such financial aid* to the community college or State-owned or State related institution to which he or she is applying.

A community college or a State-owned or State-related institution *shall waive all remaining tuition and room and board charges* (total tuition, room and board and fees minus awarded scholarships and Federal and State grants) for an eligible child during the time the child is enrolled as a full-time student, provided the child meets all requirements for admission to the community college or State-owned or State-related institution and during the child's enrollment complies with all requirements of the institution for continued attendance and award of an associate degree or baccalaureate degree.

Administration

Applications for an educational gratuity shall be submitted to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) by the child or the surviving parent or guardian of the child, together with a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or adoption record or other documentation of birth or adoption acceptable to PHEAA. The application shall include a *copy of the child's letter of acceptance* at a community college or a State-owned or State-related institution. Within 30 days of receipt of a completed application, PHEAA shall send written notice to the child and the community college or State-owned or State-related institution of the child's eligibility or non-eligibility for participation in this program.

Upon receipt of notification of the child's eligibility from PHEAA, a community college or a State-owned or State-related institution is prohibited from charging the child or the child's parent or guardian any tuition fee or room and board charge. If moneys have been received by the community college or the State-owned or State-related institution for these purposes, *those moneys must be refunded* in full within 30 days of receipt by the institution of the notice of the child's eligibility.

Retroactivity

This act shall be retroactive to January 1, 1976, and the benefit provided shall be available to qualified children of police officers, firefighters, correction employees, and National Guard members of this Commonwealth killed in the performance of their duties since that date. *No community college, State-owned or State-related institution shall reimburse qualified children for tuition and fees or room and board charges paid between January 1, 1976, and the effective date of this act.*

PHEAA OFFICES- Contact by mail 1200 North 7th Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17102. Office: (717) 720-2860. www.pheaa.org.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Workers' Compensation coverage is compulsory for employers in Pennsylvania. Death Benefit: Burial expense not exceeding \$3,000 paid directly to the undertaker or to the widow(er) with paid receipt. Survivor's benefits are payable as follows if death results substantially from a work-related injury and if the death occurs within 300 weeks after the injury.

- (1) Widow or Dependent Widower
 - (A) Widow or dependent widower with no child(ren) will receive 51% of employee's wages, but not in excess of Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (B) Widow or dependent widower and one child will receive 60% of employee's wages, but not in excess of Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (C) Widow or dependent widower and two or more children will receive 66 2/3% of employee's wages, but not in excess of Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (D) Widow will continue to receive benefits until death, or remarriage. Two-year lump sum payable to widows upon remarriage and weekly benefits cease.
 - (E) Dependent widower will continue to receive benefits until death, remarriage, or until becoming self-supporting.
- (2) Children
 - (A) If there is one dependent surviving child (s)he is entitled to receive 32% of employee's wage but not in excess of Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (B) If there are two children they are entitled to receive 42% of employee's wage but not in excess of Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (C) If there are three children they are entitled to receive 52% of employee's wage but not in excess of Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (D) If there are four children they are entitled to receive 62% of employee's wages but not in excess of Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (E) If there are five children they are entitled to receive 64% of employee's wages but not in excess of Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (F) If there are six or more children they are entitled to receive 66 2/3% of employee's wages but not in excess of

- Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
- (G) Children are entitled to receive benefits until death or age 18 or beyond age 18 if dependent due to disability or until age 23 while full-time student.
 - (3) Dependent parents (one or both) if no one entitled under (1) or (2).
 - (A) Totally dependent parents are entitled to receive 52% of employee's wages but not in excess of the Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (B) Partially dependent parents are entitled to receive 32% of employees' wages but not in excess of the Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (C) Benefits to continue until death or remarriage of parent or parents.
 - (4) Dependent brothers or sisters if no one entitled under (1), (2), or (3).
 - (A) 22% of wages for one brother or sister and
 - (B) 5% for each additional with maximum of 32% of wages not to exceed Statewide Average Weekly Wage.
 - (C) Benefits will continue until death or age 18 unless dependent due to disability.

To receive workers' compensation benefits the surviving spouse must take the initiative and file a workers' compensation claim through a workers' compensation attorney to receive any compensation. The determination as to whether the claim will be paid will be determined by the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board. Contact the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, State Labor and Industry Department, 1171 S. Cameron ST., Room 324, Harrisburg, PA 17104. Office: (800) 482-2383. www.portal.state.pa.us.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Health benefits vary depending upon police department benefits. Spouses of state and county officers may elect to continue to participate in the same benefit program in effect at the time of the officer's death. Contact the Benefits Coordinator at your agency.

RETIREMENT/PENSION

Individual cities and municipalities are responsible for providing retirement and pension plans for law enforcement officers. Contact your local agency's Benefits Assistance Officer.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

PEER SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

Established in 1984, Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc., (C.O.P.S.), is a national, non-profit organization that works with law enforcement agencies, police organizations, mental health professional, and local peer-support organizations to provide assistance to surviving families of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. C.O.P.S. has become a "lifeline" to police survivors nationwide. **Contact the C.O.P.S. National Office (800) 784-2611 or visit www.nationalcops.org/chap.htm for information on a chapter in your area.**

State Memorial for Law Enforcement

A granite memorial bearing the names of all State Police members killed in the line of duty is on display at the State Police Academy, Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania State FOP

The State Lodge will pay \$500 to spouses of deceased members.

Contact the Pennsylvania FOP at 2949 North Front Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110 or call (717) 236-6981.

FUNERAL AND CREMATION BENEFITS

Dignity Memorial funeral, cremation and cemetery providers created the Public Servants Program for emergency service personnel. This program provides dignified and honorable tributes, at no cost, for career and volunteer law enforcement officers who fall in the line of duty. Visit their website for complete information @ www.dignitymemorial.com and look under Public Servants for details. You may also call 800-344-6489 and speak with a representative.

Wilbert Funeral Services, Inc. provides complimentary burial vaults and related services for fallen law enforcement officers. For more information visit www.wilbert.com or call (888) WILBERT.